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## *House of Representatives*

# BETTER INSURING OUR VETERANS!

**HON. BOB FILNER**

OF CALIFORNIA  
IN THE HOUSE OF  
REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 5993, the Securing America's Veterans Insurance Needs and Goals, or SAVINGS, Act. This bill was sponsored by one of our esteemed colleagues, Representative Debbie Halvorson of Illinois, to ensure that beneficiaries of the Service-members' Group Life Insurance, SGLI, receive financial counseling, greater disclosure information and other needed support concerning the proceeds of their SGLI life insurance benefits. Mrs. Halvorson acted very quickly in response to some of the publicity on this and to some of the pain felt by the survivors

This bill is about disclosure, accountability, transparency. The survivors need to know what is going on. We will, as the gentleman requested, have and are pursuing the investigation. We are pursuing whether the so-called retained asset account is the legal structure that should happen. The VA is pursuing that. And we will get to that.

But right now, right now, as men and women are dying in action, their survivors need to know what is going on. We can't wait for this process to go on and on and on and on, especially when they face a huge insurance company.

The gentleman asked what organizations support us. The American Legion has a letter supporting us. I didn't hear any letter that the gentleman had. As Mrs. Halvorson read, the National Military Families Association supports this bill. And the Gold Star Wives of America, the preeminent group that works for the benefit of survivors of those who are killed in action, has sent us the following letter:

"In light of the recent news that insurance companies could potentially use group life insurance policies to profit from accounts it maintains for families of fallen soldiers, Gold Star Wives of America supports H.R. 5993. It would ensure that insurance companies authorized by VA to administer the SGLI accounts are fully open and honest about its practices for those policies on which so many service-members rely to ensure financial security for their families.

The bill, the SAVINGS Act introduced by Representative Debbie Halvorson of Illinois, would mandate that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs require insurance companies that provide coverage through this program to offer financial counseling and improved disclosure of information to family members and survivors.

It is critical that the options and information available for survivors offered under the SGLI program involve more disclosure and greater transparency. H.R. 5993 would do that by guaranteeing that survivors of our fallen heroes have access to oral and written financial counseling. These greater disclosure requirements and counseling would better help survivors to understand their options so that they make sound decisions during a stressful and sorrowful time.

Gold Star Wives of America supports H.R. 5993 so that we can do everything in our power to protect the families and survivors of our fallen soldiers. Their loved ones have answered the call and their survivors deserve these protections."